



Education Needs Assessment South Sudan - 2021

MoGEI and the South Sudan Education Cluster (SSEC), co-led by UNICEF and Save the Children, undertook a national education needs assessment (ENA) across 442 schools to provide an overview of the current education situation in South Sudan and conduct a situation analysis of the functioning of South Sudan's education system, particularly given the impact of over seven years of conflict and displacement as well as the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent interruption of education in South Sudan.

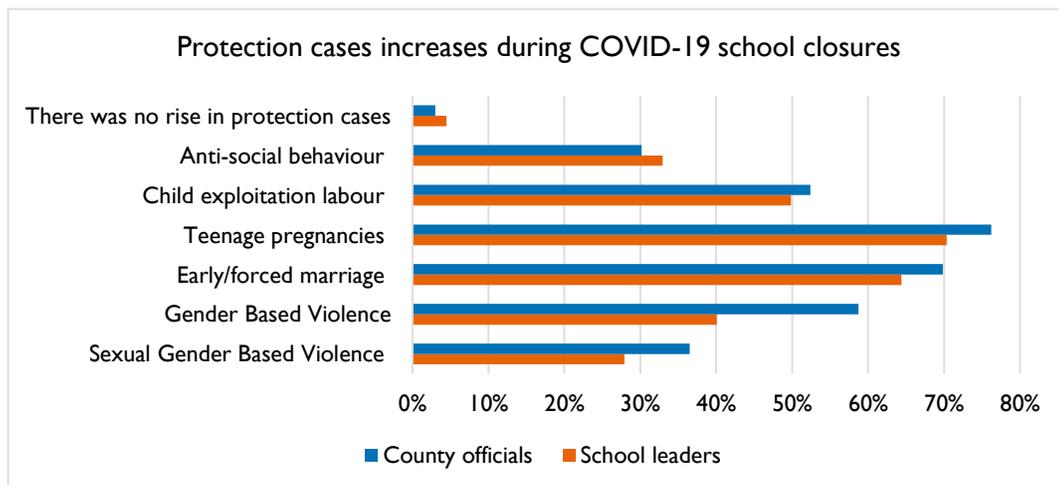
School functionality and closures:

Most schools assessed were functional (92%) while 8% were non-functional. Of non-functional schools, most (61.3%) were in rural areas. The main reasons reported for schools not functioning were teachers fleeing, students fleeing, and insecurity in or around the school. The top education interventions to support schools re-opening were reported as rehabilitation of infrastructure, teacher salaries, and school grants. Of the functional schools, 29.3% headteachers reported their school missed at least one week of education in the Academic Year 2020/2021 with the most reported reasons being COVID-19, insecurity in or around schools and unpaid teachers. 5.6% of functional schools in the ENA reported attacks in 2021 with theft/looting the most reported followed by direct attacks on education staff.

School characteristics

40.9% of surveyed schools reported that their classrooms were not accessible for Children with Disabilities (CwDs) while 59.5% reported the latrines were inaccessible for CwDs. A third of schools reported not having access to a functioning safe water source and while 19.3% of schools have no functional latrines. Slightly over half (50.4%) of surveyed schools reported that their female learners have not received any dignity kits.

40% of headteachers reported not having any functioning referral mechanism in their school/community with less than a quarter having a functioning general protection referral mechanism. During COVID-19 school closures, there was a rise in protection cases related to teenage pregnancies, early/forced marriage, and gender-based violence.





Enrolment

Overall enrolment figures, as reported by headteachers, have increased year on year from 2019 and 2020. However, there is around 7% decrease in 2021 compared to the year before, as per SAMS data. County level education official reported young mothers, married learners and CwDs as the top three groups least likely to participate in education activities.

Attendance and Drop-out

Just 2.3% of headteachers surveyed reported that all children enrolled attend school almost every day. The top reason for inconsistent attendance reported by both male and female learners was families not being able to pay fees, direct (e.g. exam fees) or indirect (e.g. uniform costs), associated with attending school. Marriage for female learners and seeking income generating opportunities for male learners were the next most reported reasons. The main reason for both male and female learners dropping out of education was also not being able to pay fees associated with school.

The top reasons headteachers cited for boys not re-enrolling following the school closures for COVID-19 were inability to pay fees (24%) and cattle rearing (13%) while for girls these reasons were pregnancy (25%) and inability to pay fees (15%).

Teachers

Unity State has the highest proportion of non-government to government teachers. Overall, female teachers are underrepresented among both government and nongovernment¹ teachers in all States. For example, for AY 2021/2022, female teachers make up 23% of government teachers and 24% of non-government teachers. The top reasons cited by headteachers for why teachers who were present at the start of the school year were not present at the time of the assessment were due to no or delayed salaries (39%), prolonged illness (13%), and lack of food (6%).

Teaching and learning supplies and school feeding

Only 15% of headteachers reported that all children in the school had both a pen or pencil and their own notebook/exercise book while just 24% of headteachers reported almost all of their teachers have a full set of textbooks for the subjects they teach. Of 322 schools who reported having CwDs enrolled, only 2% reported having enough mobility or other assistive devices.

64% of headteachers in the ENA reported that children in their school did not get a meal at school or food to take home, while over 60% of headteachers reported that the majority of learners do not get food before coming to school, with 30.94% answering no children do and 30.2% reporting almost no children do.

Support from External Partners

Most headteachers reported that their schools have not received school grants and their pupils have not received cash grants. The most reported forms of support from external partners were COVID-19 safety measures (55.3%), teaching and learning supplies (52.9%), and school feeding (41.2%). The external partners who were most reported as providing support were UNICEF/UNHCR (25% of respondents) and NGOs and INGOs (25%), followed by the World Food Program (WFP) or NGOs supported by WFP (22%) and Girls' Education South Sudan (12%).

¹ For the Education Needs Assessment, schools were classified as either government, religious group, community, private, or NGO/INGO. For this report, non-government teachers refer to teachers who work for schools that are classified as any type other than government.



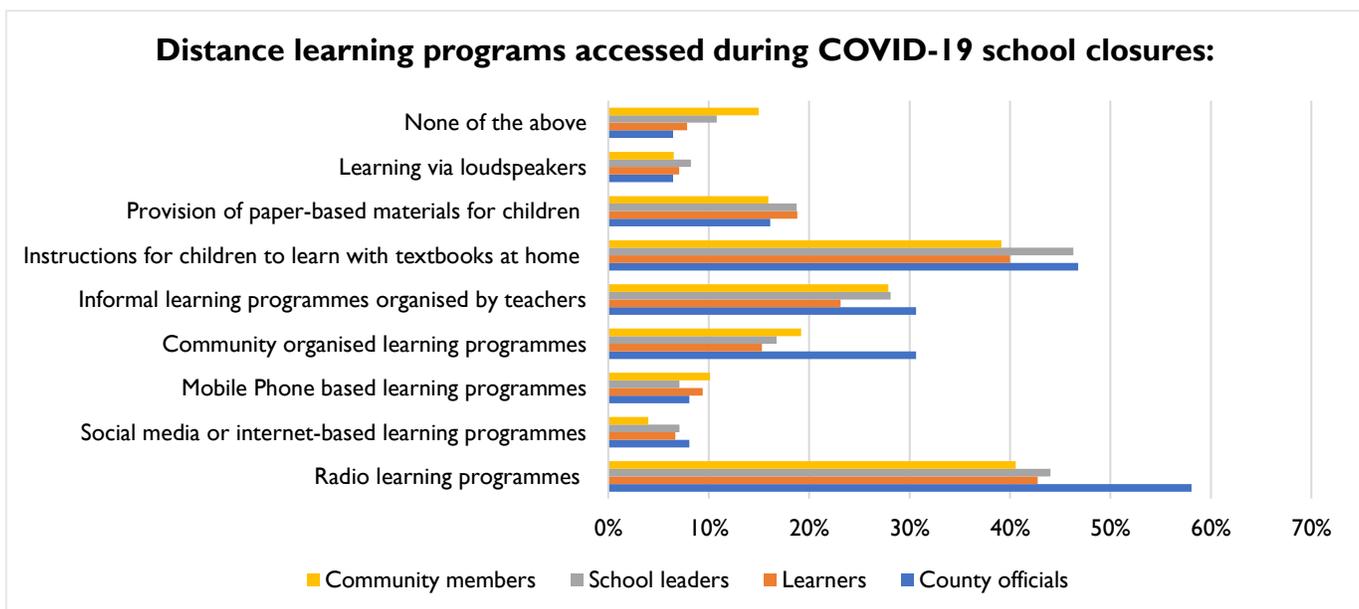


Community members reported helping to support schools in a number of ways, the most reported being supporting the mobilisation of learners (67.4%), school fees (55.4%), cleaning (46.3%) and providing security (46.0%),

The most requested support by different stakeholder groups were as follows: school grants (20% of headteachers surveyed), teacher salaries (32% of county education officials surveyed), and rehabilitation of infrastructure (25% of learners and 27% of community members surveyed).

COVID-19

When asked if learners in their community accessed any distance learning programs during the COVID-19 school closures, community members, county level education officials, headteachers and learners all most commonly reported that learners had access to radio learning programs, followed by instructions for children to learn with textbooks at home.



Conclusion

The findings from the 2021 ENA highlight that most of the education challenges that have been highlighted in previous assessments persist and have been exacerbated by COVID-19 and the subsequent school closures. Many of the challenges noted by county education officials, headteachers, learners, and community members revolve around lack of finances for both the supply and demand side of education (such as families not being able to afford fees for their children to attend schools, or teachers not receiving regular and sufficient salaries).

Economic barriers to education may make alternative options (such as cattle rearing for boys and marriage/pregnancy for girls) more attractive to families who are looking to mitigate their economic challenges, which keep children from returning to education. Other issues, highlighted by various stakeholder groups, include poor infrastructure in schools, lack of washrooms for girls, lack of food, inaccessibility for CwDs, and need for trained teachers. For future education interventions, respondents prioritized school grants, teacher salaries, rehabilitation of infrastructure, and teaching and learning materials, outlining some opportunities for education partners' support.